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THE LIFE HID WITH CHRIST

SAMUEL IRENÆUS PRIME.

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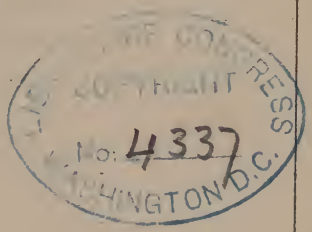
WALKING WITH GOD:

THE LIFE HID WITH CHRIST.

BY

SAMUEL IRENÆUS PRIME,

AUTHOR OF "THE POWER OF PRAYER," ETC.



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WALKING WITH GOD.

CHAPTER I.

HOW GOD DWELLS IN US, AND WE IN GOD.

IT will take but a few minutes to read the three letters of the Apostle John. Read them attentively, and with prayer. More than any other of the disciples he had the spirit and temper of the Master. It was John who leaned upon the bosom of Jesus, and he was often called the disciple whom Jesus loved. This beloved and loving disciple condenses all the attributes of the infinite God into that one word LOVE; and when he has thus embodied the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in this expression, he adds: "And he that *dwell-*

eth in love, *dwelleth* in God, and God in him. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." In those words you have the substance of all divine philosophy and practical Christianity. God is a Spirit, filling immensity with his essential presence, pervading all things; so that no part of space is where God is not. They who are in harmony with Him are happy, as He is infinitely happy. "No man," saith St. John, "hath seen God at any time." And then he adds in the same connection, the next words indeed, "If we love one another, God DWELLETH in us, and his love is perfected in us." God loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. And we know that we *dwell* in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of his Spirit. Thus the Father's love, the Son's sacrifice, and the

Spirit's indwelling, complete the work of uniting us to God ; so that we are one with Him, He in us and we in Him, by love. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

In this divine wisdom is the source of all true joy and peace, and the beginning of eternal good. The life that we led in time past, when we wrought the will of the flesh, has perished ; and the life that we now live is by faith on the Son of God. We now love God and man, and that brings us into divine harmony with the Infinite and with all good that is in our fellow-men. And as perfect love casteth out fear, and fear hath torment, this love secures and begets peace of conscience and joy in God, that fill the soul with foretastes of future glory. It

is not ideal, it is actual. This is not a vague, indefinite, mystical rhapsody or ecstasy. It is the calm content of the soul in unison with infinite love. It *dwells* in Him and is at home there, as John the beloved was when he lay in the bosom of his Lord.

Does such enjoyment unfit us for the daily duties of the busy world that demands our thought and toil? So far from such an influence, it impels us to diligence in business as we are fervent in spirit. It makes us active and faithful in the few or the many things that are committed to our care, and so much the more as we are stewards of Him whom we love and serve. What an impulse and fervor would be imparted to all the duties of life if we bought and sold, if we ploughed and sowed, if we visited and entertained, if we worked and played, under the constant power of this constraining love! Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc., and thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commands hang all the Law and the Gospel.

Whatsoever is less than this is less than duty and less than privilege. Whatever is more than this is inconceivable, for God is love, and in Him all fullness dwells.

We may be happy in this assurance, if we love God and our brother, that we are born of God and are in Him. This will stand the test of the death-bed. It will survive the flood of the cold river. And the fires of the future have no terror for a soul thus in God. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." We know that God is in us, as we are in Him, and that sin hath no more dominion over our

spirits. Our desires are after those things that we love: and if we love God and our brother we shall desire nothing, and so do nothing, but in harmony with love, which unites our will with the will of God. Then our joy is full. We may rest in this assurance, that where God is we are also; because we have been delivered from the power of sin, and renewed in the image of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is the nature of love to grow by that it feeds upon. We *dwell* in Him and receive of his fullness day by day, rising into higher and clearer regions of spiritual enjoyment, as the earthly and sensual are purified out of us by the refining power of divine grace. We may and will go on in the race and toil and turmoil of life, if its cares and burdens are laid upon us; but while we are in the world, we are not of the world. We do our work, as faithful servants whom the

Lord would find so doing when He comes. But we love not the world, nor the things that are in it. When riches increase, we will not set our hearts on them. The fashion of this world passeth away, and we have nothing here that abideth forever. Our treasure is in heaven, and our hearts are there also. Even the trials and troubles of this mortal life are not to cast us down and destroy us. They are rather to wean us away. They turn us toward Him whose bosom is heaven, and in whom we have rest and peace.

This is the fruit of union with God, spirit with spirit, the soul of man with the soul of the Universal Father, the result of LOVE. God is love. If we are like Him, we shall also be love. And just in the degree and proportion that we love God and our brother, — that is, God and man, — as we overcome the selfishness of the natural heart, and go

out after that which is for the honor of God and the good of others; in that degree and proportion we are in harmony with the holiness of God, and our souls are made one with Him. Therefore, there is a real apprehensible sense in which we become partakers of the divine nature. This is the meaning of it. We are like Him, as we love Him and our brother.

Sin hath no more dominion over us. All that we do is prompted by love, and love worketh no ill to his neighbor. If the motive is good, and the act fitted to make our brother, sister, or friend happy, it is well pleasing to God, who is Himself infinitely happy in perfect love.

If only I have Thee,
If only mine Thou art,
And to the grave
Thy power to save
Upholds my faithful heart, —
Naught can then my soul annoy,
Lost in worship, love, and joy.

If only I have Thee,
I gladly all forsake.
To follow on
Where Thou hast gone,
My pilgrim staff I take;
Leaving other men to stray
In the bright, broad, crowded way.

If only I have Thee,
If only Thou art near,
In sweet repose
My eyes shall close,
Nor Death's dark shadow fear;
And thy heart's flood through my breast,
Gently charm my soul to rest.

If only I have Thee,
Then all the world is mine;
Like those who gaze
Upon the ways
That from thy glory shine,
Rapt in holy thought of Thee,
Earth can have no gloom for me.

Where only I have Thee,
There is my Fatherland;
For everywhere
The gifts I share
From thy wide-spreading hand;
And in all my human kind,
Long-lost brothers dear I find. — NOVALIS.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TO LIVE WITH GOD.

YOU are in the pursuit of the "higher life," the life that is hid with Christ in God; the life that now is, but so refined and exalted, so purified by faith and love, that it becomes a sweet foretaste and anticipation of the life that is to come.

You ask if this sort of expectation, longing, seeking, and striving, is not part of the mysticism, quietism, and pietism of other ages, and utterly incompatible with the activities and abounding duties that press upon the mind and soul of the modern saint. You refer to the mystics, who profess a pure and simple life of worship, abstract devotion, calm, holy contemplation, and thus finding immedi-

ate intercourse with God, maintain a religious life, a secret communion with the unseen and eternal, and grow daily in the knowledge and love of divine things, so that they are transformed into the image of Him who is invisible. Madame Guyon was one of this kind of Christians. There is much in Fénelon's writings to encourage it. Religious asceticism fosters the same tendency. There are orders in the Romish Church that cherish it, and as the Ritualist in the Church of England approaches the Church of Rome, he is apt to fall into this way of thinking and feeling, mistaking it for religion.

I would not repress one aspiration of your soul after simple holiness, holiness in the abstract, holiness apart from the service that holiness impels to, and without which, in my view, true holiness is impossible. Yes; be holy as God is holy. Live above the world while you are in it. Meditate, pray. Read the

lives of saints. Love and live for love. With all my heart I say with the pious Rutherford, —

"O, if this world knew the excellency, sweetness, and beauty of that high and lofty One, that fairest among the sons of men, verily they would see that if their love were bigger than ten heavens, — all in circles beyond each other, — it were all too little for Christ our Lord. I hope that your choice will not repent you when life shall come to that twilight between time and eternity, and you shall see the utmost border of time, and shall draw the curtain and look into eternity, and shall one day see God take the heavens in his hands and fold them together like an old garment, and set on fire this clay part of the creation of God, and consume away into smoke and ashes the idle hope of poor fools who think there is not a better country than this low region of dying clay."

You cannot see too much of the loveliness of Christ our Lord, the chief among ten thousand. Meditation on Him day and night is sweet. He giveth songs in the night. And in hours of solitude, sickness, pain, weariness, heaviness, when the soul needs repose, and longs for comfort, peace, and strength, — then and always He is the soul's bright Morning Star. Adopt Him into your soul as the One altogether lovely. And so you shall find your exceeding great reward, peace and joy in Him, the assurance of hope, and the brightness of the Father's glory manifested unto you in the face of his Son. This is the privilege of every believer. It is the birthright of every soul that is born of God. Doubts, fears, despondencies are wrong, dishonoring Him who has brought you out of darkness into marvelous light. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. For this is the will of Him who hath

slain every enemy of your peace, and brought life and immortality to your soul. To be always in the light of the divine countenance is the privilege of the believer.

You tell me that the *age* and the Church make such demands upon your time and thought, you have scarce a chance for the cultivation of personal holiness; you are too busy to think, meditation is out of the question, and time for prayer is rescued with a struggle from the active duties of an absorbing life. I have a lively sense of your experience. I am tempted in all those points like as you are. And it is well to remember that our Blessed Lord, when He walked this earth for our salvation, left behind not only the merits of his final sacrifice as He offered up his life for our redemption, but also that beautiful life of his which remains for our example. He went about doing good.

It cannot be that his stirring, moving, restless habits interfered with his habitual intercourse with God the Father. It was not needful for his personal piety and daily food of soul that He should go to the mountain-top, or the garden, or the wilderness, to spend long solitary hours in prayer. He sought retirement when his wants impelled Him to such retreats. But his life was with his fellow-men. He was active, laborious, untiring in his efforts to do the work He came to do. And why, dear friend, should not those who love Christ make Him the model of their own lives, and like Him be always at work, *doing?* The tendency of our times is not towards doing too much for Christ, but towards getting others to do work in our stead. Christ wrought out his life and died for us. It is not like Him for us to be content with service paid for by our money. That is well, but there is something more

and better. It is actual, personal labor, labor that requires self-denial and sacrifice, and sometimes humiliation and often privation ; labor that compels us to go about as Jesus did, when He became weary with walking, and even then kept on preaching to a solitary sinner, who received the words of eternal life from his lips !

Thorwaldsen, that wonderful Danish sculptor, whose dust lies in Copenhagen, surrounded by models of his mighty art, was never satisfied with any of his works, till he had made a model for his statue of CHRIST. He had had thoughts of heroes and pagan deities, and the world has admired them as beyond its conceptions of ideal greatness. But he was toiling after something better, and often, in the weary disappointment of a great soul unsatisfied, he had said, " It is high, I cannot attain unto it." And when he had made his idea of Christ manifest and

immortal in marble, he said, "I shall never do anything great again." To have realized in art one's conception of Jesus, ought to satisfy the longings of the greatest human soul.

And who of us has dreamed of *being* like Him yet? We are not striving to produce his image in marble; that were great. We are longing to have Him formed in us, to become like Him, to be changed into his image, so that we may be Christians as he was Christ. And this is not to be by going into a cloister, or a bed-chamber, or a boudoir, or a cell, and shutting the windows and door, and living alone with Jesus. He is not fond of such retreats. With the sick or wounded in body, He would dwell anywhere. But He knows the difference between laziness and illness. He does not love to be confined to such lodgings, unless his people are suffering, and praying for his presence and help. The hearts of the

two disciples burned within them when the unknown Jesus talked with them as they were walking. And He made Himself known unto them while they were eating bread.

All this means, dear friend, that you shall grow in grace, love, and knowledge of Christ our Lord by doing his will, walking in his footsteps, living as He lived, praying without ceasing, always abounding in the work of the Lord; having something to do, and doing it with a will, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. You have time to eat, for the life of the body demands that you eat; but to eat all the time is not for the health of the body. You have time to meditate; but to meditate all the time, is not for the health of the soul. And to be a well-developed, symmetrical, and useful Christian, you will bring into exercise and keep employed in the active, daily,

constant duties of the Christian life, all the faculties of the redeemed soul.

HOLD on, my heart, in thy believing!
The steadfast only wins the crown.
He who, when stormy waves are heaving,
Parts with his anchor, shall go down.
But he who Jesus holds through all,
Shall stand, though heaven and earth shall fall.

Hold *in* thy murmurs, Heaven arraigning,
The patient see God's loving face;
Who bear their burdens uncomplaining,
'Tis they that win the Father's grace.
He wounds himself who bears the rod,
And sets himself to fight with God.

Hold *out!* There comes an end to sorrow;
Hope from the dust shall conquering rise;
The storm foretells a sunnier morrow;
The Cross points on to Paradise.
The Father reigneth; cease all doubt;
Hold on, my heart, hold in, hold out!

CHAPTER III.

A LIFE HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.

THE Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington is adorned with historic pictures by great painters. One of them has a story which the artist told me one summer evening on the Hudson.

The picture is the Embarkation of the Pilgrim Fathers. The artist is Wier. He was a skeptic, an utter unbeliever in Christianity, when he selected his theme. A subject related to American history was required, and he made choice of this without a thought of its religious associations. Having made the drawing upon the wide-stretched canvas, he began to lay on the colors. There was Robinson on his knees, and Miles Standish in his armor, and Rose in her beauty and glory,

and the group of men and women! Well, what for were they there? He perceived, as they lay in his mind yet uncreated, that they were animated by some principle of which he himself had no consciousness. He could not paint what he could not comprehend. He knew nothing more of the sentiment of those pilgrims than does a deaf man of the concord of sweet sounds. He studied their times, their lives, their deeds, their sacrifices, their purposes, and hopes. And as he studied, the truth gradually stole into his own soul that they were of a race to which he did not belong. They had a life within them he had never lived. They were in a world of which he knew less than he did of the fixed stars. Mr. Wier told me that he studied the subject till he became a Christian: and then he did that work, the great work of his life.

He found the secret spring of all their action was their religion. Their life was

hid with Christ in God. Home, ease, wealth, country, — what was all this to them who sought freedom to live for Christ: to follow Him, to enjoy their union with Him, to have a life hid with Him in God.

If you will study the lives of good, brave men who have walked the path of duty fearlessly and faithfully, and have suffered as they travelled, their feet bleeding as they went; if you will take the "Book of Martyrs" and observe how calmly they have bowed their heads to the axe, or how joyously they embraced the stake, if they must go up to glory in flames, or — what is far harder to be endured than fagot or scaffold — if you have seen simple-hearted, humble, patient good men, leading lives of self-denial and reproach, and submitting to loss of place, and distinction, and comfort, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, or preferring the service of God to the pleas-

ures and honors of the world, you have found in them the men whose lives are hid with Christ in God.

One of the most distinguished of American statesmen, who had aspired to the highest seat, but died without attaining it, said to me in his dying chamber that this union with God, through Christ, was the greatest and only desire of his heart.

It is easier for us who are not great to understand it and enjoy it, than for men who have the weight of empires on their hearts. Many of the sweetest and deepest mysteries of life in God are hid from the great and wise, but revealed to such babes in the Gospel as you and I. They stand up and refuse to learn. Babes lie on the bosom of love, and drink it in from the fountain of life itself. Babes get the sincere milk of truth, and grow thereby. Just as the branch draws its life from the trunk and the root, so the

soul, joined by love to Christ, partakes of this life, grows into Him and becomes one with Him. "And of his fullness," said our favorite teacher, "have we received grace for grace." Each grace that goes to make up the fullness of Christ's life, comes to the soul in union with Him. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." The life that he once lived has passed away. "For *ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

The fruit of this union is found in the soul's daily and delicious experience of all that is meant by the wonderful prayer, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ" (mark the paradox), "which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God!"

It strikes me that those are the most wonderful of all the wonders of God's words to man: that we, sinful creatures, worms and worse, for they are not sinful, but worms compared with Him who holds worlds infinite in his hand, — that we may be filled with ALL the fullness of God. I break right down under the thought of it. And then I get the beauty and glory of it. The soul, by virtue of this union with God, has the divine life in it. Rising above the fears and fascinations of sin, growing into the image of Him whose new life is now the soul's life, it becomes absorbed in the pursuit and the enjoyment of something higher and better than it ever tasted or sought before. The sources of pleasure from which the soul drank before are not cut off: but those sources are themselves purified, and living water springs up even in a desert. Love, friends, letters, music, art, are not less to the soul in

Christ than they were when the eye and ear and heart had not been anointed. They are all loved more, enjoyed more, because "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The senses ministered in sin to that which was sensual: now the same senses are the servants of God, and all the members instruments of righteousness. The joy of the believer in all the delights they yield, is the joy of a soul whose life is hid with Christ in God. As a worm that lies dead in a noisome cell bursts its prison, and spreads its golden wings and flies into the air, a thing of life and beauty, so the soul, that was dead in sin, undergoes the mysterious transformation of renewing grace, becomes at once a new creature, spreads its wings, and is glad in the atmosphere of a fresh existence, a higher life, a purer, better, happier being.

An unbelieving friend may smile at

this, as a mild phase of religious rhapsody. But he does not know anything about it. He is all unconscious of the secret pleasure of the soul in Christ. "I have meat to eat," said the Master, "that ye know not of." "I have joy," says the believer, "that the world does not understand." There's not one joy the world can give, that is not mine and sweetened too; or else, in the room of it, Christ, in whom my life is hid, gives me something better far.

In thy service will I ever,
Jesus, my Redeemer, stay;
Nothing me from Thee shall sever,
Gladly would I go thy way.
Life in me thy life produces,
And gives vigor to my heart,
As the vine doth living juices
To the purple grape impart.

Could I be in other places
Half so happy as with Thee,
Who so many gifts and graces
Hast Thyself prepared for me?

No place could be half so fitted
To impart true joy, I ween,
Since to Thee, O Lord ! committed,
Power in heaven and earth hath been.

Where shall I find such a Master,
Who hath done my soul such good,
And retrieved the great disaster
Sin first caused, by his own blood?
Is not He my rightful owner,
Who for me his own life gave?
Were it not a foul dishonor
Not to love Him to the grave?

Yes, Lord Jesus, I am ever
Thine in sorrow and in joy;
Death the union shall not sever,
Nor eternity destroy.
I am waiting, yea, and sighing
For my summons to depart;
He is best prepared for dying,
Who in life is thine in heart.

Let thy light on me be shining
When the day is almost gone,
When the evening is declining,
And the night is drawing on:
Bless me, O my Saviour ! laying
Thy hands on my weary head;
"Here thy day is ended," saying,
"Yonder live the faithful dead."

Stay beside me, when the stillness
And the icy touch of death
Fills my trembling soul with chillness,
Like the morning's frosty breath;
As my failing eyes grow dimmer,
Let my spirit grow more bright,
As I see the first faint glimmer
Of the everlasting light. — SPITTA.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW TO SEE GOD.

I WAS in company with some pupils of the Institution for the Blind, when they were speaking of their pleasure in seeing the ordinance of baptism in the church they had recently attended. They had, in fact, *seen* nothing at all: their eyes were darkened that they could not see, but they enjoyed the sacrament, and spoke of it as if it were as palpable to their sense of sight as to mine.

Mr. Milburn, the blind preacher, is endowed with an exquisite sense of the beautiful in nature and art, and one day I asked if it made any difference to him, in his blindness, whether objects of beauty were about him or not. "All the difference in the world," he said; for he

found gratification in that which others enjoyed, and a feeling of pleasure, perhaps keener than we experience whose eyes are opened, was his in the atmosphere of the lovely.

In Italy, I met an English gentleman of wealth and high intellectual culture, totally blind, travelling for pleasure, and writing a book on art! He had two companions, who with him visited the galleries and churches and homes of the beautiful in beautiful Italy, and he was enjoying everything, perhaps more than they who were eyes to the blind.

The inner sense of these sightless seers had been educated into harmony with the principles of beauty in the world about them. They were in sympathy with the perfect in nature and art. They would be thrilled by standing in the presence of the Apollo of the Vatican ; and to touch a production of Raphael, to feel of a work of genius, would be a joy like

to that which exquisite music sends through the soul. To see beauty, the soul must come into contact with it, and the joy is complete.

And when the Lord of glory was teaching the multitude on the mount, and those blessed lips, which spake as man never spake, were opened to drop words of infinite wisdom, He said, "Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall *see* God." To see God is to enjoy God. The pious patriarch said, "In my flesh shall I see God." He had faith to believe the time was coming when he would have face to face communion with God, as friend with friend.

There is more in seeing God, than in being permitted to stand or to kneel in the blaze of infinite glory and gaze upon its excessive brightness with dazzled eyes. The blessedness promised to the pure in heart comprehends and confers the enjoyment of that wonderful trans-

formation from darkness into light inaccessible. It brings a prisoner out of a dungeon where no ray of sunshine gladdened his perpetual midnight, and ushers him all at once into the liberty and glory of the children of the King, who walk in white raiment and dwell in heavenly places, and sit on thrones with angels. To see God is to enjoy God. Eye hath not seen Him. Ear hath not heard what it is, but the blind shall see Him. These dull senses of ours, so often tortured now with pain, so stupid even in the midst of wonderful revelations of God in the world around us, — the earth and sea and stars, — these same senses may be so refined and purified as to be the avenues of joy that as yet no mind has conceived. And that would not be heaven. It would be the vestibule, not the temple.

The greatest of our poets has said, if we were suddenly divested of our mortality, we should find ourselves in the

midst of a mighty theatre, filled with spectators in successive galleries reaching to the skies, all looking on the scenes in which we are now acting our part, unconscious of the cloud of witnesses that surround us. It is better to be impressed and governed by the thought that if we were suddenly delivered from the cloud of sin, we should be instantly in the presence of the Infinite, beholding his glory. This would be heaven. This is heaven.

There is a place — I know there is, for Jesus said He was going to make it ready for them who love Him — there is a place where the Father dwells in the midst of uncreated light, Himself the Light ; where his temple and his throne are, as they are not anywhere else in the universe, filled by his essential presence. But I am persuaded, also, that if I should take the wings of the morning and ascend into the heavens,

anywhere in the wide realms of boundless space — beyond the rim of this vast system of worlds so wide away from our little planet, that shining orbs more lustrous than the sun have not yet reached us with their light, though travelling hither from creation's morn till now — if anywhere a pilgrim, footsore or on weary wing, I should be made pure in heart, then and there, in the midst of angel songs of gladness, I should see God!

To see God is to enjoy God. We become like to that which we love. There is a wonderful transforming power in love. We grow into the image — "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is! This is the way, the truth, and the life. We want to be like Him, and we

want to see Him, and seeing Him is to make us like Him. And the way to be like Him and to see Him, is to be pure in heart.

And this is just the hardest and lowliest lesson to learn in the Christian life. It cometh not but by prayer and fasting; but it may come, and we lose our blessing if we do not get the victory. "To him that overcometh," saith the Spirit, "will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The battle is to be fought in secret, and the victory is not to be marked by any other monument than this white stone, pure, and inscribed with the name of the purified. Deeds are nothing here. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." He who opened his heart to give his blood for us, He has done the work, has redeemed us unto Himself, that He might present us unto his

Father, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This is a heart exercise, an internal experience. The world knoweth not of it. There are varieties of outer life, and they have nothing to do with this inner, spiritual cleansing which is to make us pure in heart, that we may see God. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

I've found a joy in sorrow,
A secret balm for pain,
A beautiful to-morrow
Of sunshine after rain.
I've found a branch of healing
Near every bitter spring;
A whispered promise stealing
On every broken string.

I've found a glad hosanna
For every woe and wail,
A handful of sweet manna
When grapes from Eshcol fail.
I've found a Rock of Ages
When desert wells were dry,
And after weary stages,
I've found an Elim nigh, —

An Elim with its coolness,
  Its fountains and its shade;
A blessing in its fullness,
  When buds of promise fade!
O'er tears of soft contrition
  I've seen a rainbow light;
A glory and fruition,
  So near, — yet out of sight.

My Saviour! Thee possessing,
  I have the joy, the balm,
The healing and the blessing,
  The sunshine and the psalm:
The promise for the fearful,
  The Elim for the faint,
The rainbow for the tearful,
  The glory for the saint. — CREUDSON.

CHAPTER V.

MEN WHO HAVE WALKED WITH GOD.

DAVID BRAINERD went away from home, a very young man, with tender sensibilities, and strong human sympathies and loves, to preach Christ Jesus to the wild Indians on the Forks of the Delaware. He was without a companion. Alone, yet not alone. He and Henry Martyn, more than other disciples of Christ, in their lonely labors have ever been my models of men whose lives were hid with Christ in God. If you have not recently read the memoirs of these lovely men, take an early day for it, and study them both, as wonderful examples of what this union of the believer's soul with the Master means.

You know the complex but simple na-

ture of your own being: how that the spirit indwelling is the breath of the Maker, immortal as He who gave it, and susceptible of the highest and purest joy in its relations to Him from whom it came. Sin has for a season separated it from its source. The light and peace and joy that it may have by intercourse with Him who is the fountain of life, are cut off and lost when the soul lives in sin. But when we who sometime were afar off, in the cold and the dark, are made nigh by the work which Christ has done for us, and sinful desires subdued by the Holy Spirit, we are new creatures. That is the language of the word of God, and reads to the unanointed as mere technical language, belonging to the schools of religious thought, and not fitted or intended to convey any really practical idea to the common mind. But the lives of good men and good women are in proof that this language is intel-

ligible and to the life. I have asked you to read the memoirs of two young men of genius, culture, and opportunities. Either of them might have been illustrious in any department of human greatness. Both of them gave their youth and talents and learning to the service of Jesus Christ, and in the morning of their lives *perished*, if to fall in the service of God is to perish. They did not find in their work that kind of enjoyment which, but for circumstances perhaps beyond their control, they might have had. But it is no great part of a good man's lot to enjoy himself. To be good and to do good are his ends, and the glory is to be revealed hereafter. The lesson I read in their lives is, that they lived out of themselves, for others, with Christ in God. Their life was hid. The world about them did not see it, could not; but it was a real life, that absorbed their ambition, tasked their energies,

warmed their sympathies, and filled up the measure of their days so rapidly, that both of them finished their course old men, with scarcely thirty years of life to grow old in.

Around me now are many who have found the secret of living with Christ in God. They do not go on a mission to the heathen, to live it. They do not shut themselves out from the social or the business cares and duties of life. I think they are among the most active members of society, and they pursue the business of the world with an ardor and zest that to some may seem incompatible with the constant service of Christ. But they have received into their natures by union with Christ those graces which we are told are the fruits and proofs of this hidden life: mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and, above all, love: and they are forbearing and forgiving. They are cheer-

ful, and patient, and charitable, in honor preferring one another, and rejoicing in the joy of them who come into the sunlight of their gentle and attractive lives. Some of them are rich, and they use their wealth to gladden and refresh the world. Some of them have gifts to write, to paint, to sing, to teach; and "whatsoever they do in word or deed, they do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

The world does not call them saints, and they do not make religion repulsive by an affectation of austerity which they do not feel and will not assume. But the world knows that they are living a life that is not its life. The very touch of business with a good man has the feel of a higher life in it than the mere pursuit of gold. In social life the charm of beauty catches the glow of heaven, and the soul in union with Him who is alto-

gether lovely, makes the cheek radiant with love almost divine. At home, the spot where the graces of the spirit shine with their sweetest influence, this hidden life with Christ breathes the fragrance of a garden of spices, and makes the atmosphere redolent of peace and love. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

A life hid with Christ in God is insensible to the fear of death. If Christ is safe, you are, for you are *in* Him. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son*. He that hath the Son, hath life. These things have I written unto you, that *ye may know* that ye have eternal life." What is it to die, if the soul is already in Christ? The life that we now live is by faith on the Son of God, and to die is but to remove the only veil be-

tween us and Him who is our life, and in whom we are to sleep, wake, and live forever.

There are times, in the experience of almost every believer, when the soul is in sympathy with Him whose sorrow pressed the sweat like blood drops from his brow. Then the believer bears about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. David Brainerd and Henry Martyn had such hours — long, dreadful hours. So had the poet Cowper, melancholy to the verge of madness. How the holy Payson suffered! I can cite you as long a list as the roll in the eleventh of Hebrews, of men who have been burdened in soul till grace seemed to fail, and philosophy was vain, and love itself had no balm for the mind in anguish. But even to them, all of whom suffered only because the body is the seat of disease, and while the soul is in it must be more or less under its dominion, even to them this precious

truth came like the whispers of angels to the spirit's ear, saying: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

And now, what shall I say more? "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us." For this union He came to us, took upon Him our nature, prayed in the flesh that we might be one with Him, and then laid down his life that our life might be hid with Him in God. Now, the whole mystery of godliness is plain to you. Believe in Christ and you are united to Him, one with Him: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," and "he that hath the Son, hath life."

Take this truth into your soul and be at peace. Be glad in it, if you wish to be glad. But any way be content, for "your life is hid with Christ," and

you shall be "filled with all the fullness of God."

O Holy Spirit, enter in,
Among these hearts thy work begin,
  Thy temple deign to make us;
Sun of the soul, Thou Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine,
  To strength and gladness wake us.
Where Thou shinest Life from heaven
      There is given:
      We before Thee
For that precious gift implore Thee.

Left to ourselves we shall but stray;
O lead us on the narrow way,
  With wisest counsel guide us,
And give us steadfastness, that we
May henceforth truly follow Thee,
  Whatever woes betide us.
Heal Thou gently hearts now broken,
      Give some token
      Thou art near us,
Whom we trust to light and cheer us.

O mighty Rock, O Source of Life,
Let thy dear Word, 'mid doubt and strife,
  Be so within us burning,
That we be faithful unto death

In thy pure Love and holy Faith,
From Thee true wisdom learning.
Lord, thy graces on us shower ;
By thy power
Christ confessing,
Let us win his grace and blessing. — SCHIRMER.

CHAPTER VI.

THINKING OF GOD.

IT is a German idea, and one not likely to be within our experience, that we should never be so absorbed with business or any other object of desire, as to be unconscious of the presence of God! — that we should have our thoughts always in God, as pervading the universe, dwelling in us, and we in Him, so that, in all our conversation and our cares, we shall be under the power of the truth that we are surrounded still with God! There may be a sense in which this constant intercourse with God is possible. But, to obtain it, thousands have become hermits, and monks, and ascetics, and have doubtless come no nearer to realizing it than when they lived with God in the world as others do.

But there is no harm, there may be great benefit in trying the experiment, to see how near you can come to keeping the idea always in the mind, "Thou God seest me," and lovest me. It is not likely that when the Lord God walked in the garden and talked with Adam as with a friend, that the man ceased from his pleasant labors which he was set to do. Cheerful in their pursuit and faithful to his trust, he went on dressing and keeping the trees and shrubs and flowers, and all the while the joy of the Lord was in his soul, and he communed with his Maker. Enoch walked with God. He did not hide away from men that he might be with God. He walked with Him in the every-day duties of life, and, when those duties were done, God took him. But he was no recluse. He was an active Christian, and in his action he had daily, hourly, perhaps constant knowledge of God.

No one thing gives the believer more disquietude than the intrusion of unholy thoughts, and many a saint has been discouraged and sad because such thoughts come unbidden, and will not go when bidden to depart. It was Cecil's homely illustration that the best way to keep chaff out of the measure is to fill it with wheat. And beyond all doubt the mind that turns to God, when the care of life permits it to leave present duty, will find in Him so much to employ, and entertain and delight, that lower and sensual thoughts can hardly find a door of entrance into the soul. Read the 139th Psalm. Commit it to memory. It will repay the labor, even if you have passed the time of life when it is easy to learn anything "by heart." But this is just the way you should learn that remarkable and sublime poem: get it by *heart*. You will love to repeat it as you walk by the way, and, in the darkness it shall

make the night light about you. Thinking on Him, you will become like Him. "My meditations of Him shall be sweet," said the inspired poet, who also said of the word of God: "It is my meditation all the day," and "I have remembered thy name in the night."

It is no part of this teaching, if such familiar discourse as this may aspire to be counted instruction, that you are to devote one hour less to the active and social labors and pleasures of the life that now is. Unless, as indeed it is true of many, and may be of you, that you are now so devoted to business or pleasure that you do not allow time for meditation, prayer, reading, and so sacrifice health of soul and body on the altar of your own selfish desires after gold or earthly joy. Such devotion is idolatry. For all the religion you can enjoy while thus absorbed, you might just as well keep an idol in your bed-chamber and

burn a written prayer before it night and morning. But you are not so blinded and debased. Or you may be so given to *doing* good as to forget the equally important duty of *getting* good. Some Christians are so active, ceaseless, restless in their labors of love, driving from one place to another at the call of benevolence, that they have no time for the quiet culture of their own hearts, the peaceful study of divine truth, and meditation in secret on Him who is the soul's refreshment, nourishment, and life. They are disgusted when told that they are religiously dissipated ; that they are doing good work in the vineyards of others while their own is lying waste. You are not one of these, but you know them and sometimes envy their usefulness. They will have their reward, but not so great and bright a gift of divine regard will come down on their heads in the day when the King shall make up his jewels,

as on yours, if you are found faithful in every trust committed to your keeping, and have walked with Him day by day, hour after hour, doing with your might what your hand finds to do, and whether you eat or drink, work or play or pray, have done all to the glory of God.

This walking with God is not a mere abstraction. The relation in which Jesus Christ in his humanity stands to our race, has made our intercourse with God easily apprehended. Christ the Son of God became man. He took upon Him our nature. He became one of us. This is purely a truth revealed of God, and to be received by faith. It is not needful that we understand it. But God has come down to men. In his Son He has become like unto us who are "partakers of the divine nature." And as God manifest in the flesh is the great mystery of godliness, so our union with Him who was thus manifested is the whole secret

of the Christian religion. It is our faith. "As we are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." And the change wrought in us by the Holy Spirit has brought us into harmony with the mind and will of Him who became flesh and dwelt among us. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." As the heart goes out after the object of its great affection, so that the image of one we love is ever with us as a presence and companion, cheering us in solitude, stimulating us to duty, and filling the fullness of our hope of rest and joy to come, so the image of Him who is formed in us the hope of glory is before our minds continually, the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. In the hours of business the mind often turns to Him, as memory in the busiest hour brings near an absent friend. We walk with Him. He bears us about

with Him. In the excitement of pleasure, the thought of Him is sweet. And when we can shut the door upon the world, He comes in and sups with us, and we with Him. We meditate on Him in the weary watches, when He giveth songs in the night. We sleep on his breast, and wake in his arms.

Walk with God, my dear friend. Great peace have they who walk with Him, and joy; and, by and by, they have glory. In the morning, welcome Him with the sunbeams. Keep near Him while the burden and heat of the day are upon thee. And when the curtain of the evening falls around thee, his love shall be thy light and salvation, and by and by He shall take thee to Himself, and thou shalt walk with Him in white raiment. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

O FOR a heart of calm repose
Amid the world's loud roar,
A life that like a river flows
Along a peaceful shore!

Come, Holy Spirit, still my heart
With gentleness divine:
Indwelling peace Thou canst impart,
O make that blessing mine!

Above these scenes of storm and strife
There spreads a region fair:
Give me to live that higher life,
And breathe that heavenly air!

Come, Holy Spirit, breathe that peace!
That victory make me win:
Then shall my soul her conflict cease,
And find a heaven within.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

YOU say that you cannot make this intercourse with God such a real communion and converse as it would seem to be in the experience of others. You have a vague and indefinite idea of enjoyment in being good and doing good, but you have no consciousness that the Infinite God is dwelling in your spirit. And you ask me what is meant by communion with God, and how it is to be found and enjoyed.

It is not unlikely that you, with many others, have formed some idea of what ought to be your religious experience, and, because it is not realized in your daily consciousness, you are filled with apprehensions lest you have not been

received into union with God. We do not pretend to know how the Holy Spirit acts upon our spirits. Our knowledge of things from without comes to us through the senses, and we are taught that the truth, which we receive by hearing and seeing, is the medium through which God himself reaches our souls to make us holy. The Saviour prayed that this might be the way, and we have consciousness that it is the way. Doubtless God can, and perhaps He does, act directly upon our spirit, so as to produce in us what He desires. But that is not the usual method of divine influence. The Master said to his disciples, "The Holy Spirit shall take of the things that are mine and show them unto you." And "all that the Father hath," he said, "are mine." This is certainly very intelligible. The truth of God in his written word is the medium through which the Holy Spirit imparts to the be-

liever the things that he needs for the nourishment and joy of his soul.

This is natural as well as spiritual. The words of a departed friend are read over and over again, and with increased enjoyment and profit. Letters from those we love are not useless when once perused. The dearer the friend, the more precious they are; the more frequently and tenderly we read them. Thus we have communion with one absent from us. Though we do not send back a response, the written thoughts of the one far away become part of our own. This is a very imperfect illustration of our intercourse with God. Imperfect, because there is in the reception of God's truth by the believer a supernatural power employed to make it effectual. The Holy Spirit takes the truth and applies it to the spirit of the believer, as no words of human love are sent home to the heart. "In sundry times and

divers manners," God has revealed Himself to his children without the aid of his written word, and we do not deny that He sometimes speaks to them now directly, impressing his will upon the soul, without the aid of words, to be read or heard, so that the believer knows he is taught of God. But the way and the truth and the life are through the word of his grace made plain to the understanding by the Holy Spirit.

You will find this communion with God in his word intensified in its enjoyment, according to your faith and perseverance in prayer. I do not know why prayer is made a condition of God's revelation of Himself to his creatures: why the infinitely loving and Almighty Father is to be reached by the supplication of his creatures, so that He will do for them what He would not from the fullness of his benevolent nature. He did not give his Son to die for man, be-

cause man asked Him to. But He has taught us to pray, and has so established the relationship between us and Him, that our intercourse is through his word and our prayer. He hears our requests and gives us what we ask, and, in so giving, manifests Himself unto us. This is proved in the same way that philosophy proves any theory or principle. It is not simply a matter of revelation. It is an established fact, confirmed by thousands of examples in history, in observation, and experience. Every Christian is a living witness to the truth that God answers prayer. And on the strength of this settled principle, of which you have no reason to doubt, you may go with freedom and confidence to God in prayer and tell Him all you want, with the assurance that He will hear and answer, and make Himself known to you as hearing and answering.

Thus your prayer and his word are the

means of communion with God. You may study the writings of saints of other days, among whom may be mentioned such eminent instructors in the art of holy living as Fénelon and Thomas à Kempis and Baxter and Doddridge. They will be read with profit, when much that we now read more, will have been forgotten. They were holy men, and had communion with God. And they will help you toward holiness. But we are living in another day, and under other circumstances. They tend to the life of meditation and retirement. There is no harm, but great good, in getting more out of the world than we do in our day. But we are in the activities of a progressive age. Our saints are not hermits. The best of Christians are among those who *do* the most for God and man. And if they have communion with God, they must and will have it while they imitate the Master who *went*

about doing good. Devotion — which in other days implied seclusion and fasting and mortification — now inspires labor and giving and personal effort, to make the world better and happier for our being in it. Such Christians as the mystical writers of earlier times would educate, have no standing in the Church militant of to-day. Their sincerity we do not question. But their type of piety is not developed by the Holy Spirit in the Church of our times.

All around thee, by night and day, in the street and the house, in company or alone, is the infinite, loving Father. He knows all your weaknesses, your poverty of spirit, the barrenness of your soul, your coldness of love, your want of faith, your feeling of distance from Him, of isolation, separation, and non-intercourse. Cry out to Him! Let the desires of thy heart find earnest utterance in words, and the very words shall inflame and

feed thy desires. And He who seeth and heareth in secret shall reward thee openly. He will speak to thee in the still, soft influence of his Spirit, bringing to thy spirit messages of grace and peace, and thou shalt know Him in the manifestations He makes of himself in his word. Speak to Him, and He will speak to thee. Be not afraid. He is thy Father. He is not afar off. He loves to converse with thee. Pour out thy soul before Him. Commune with Him, and He will with thee.

LEAVE God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him, whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
An all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that naught can move.

What can these anxious cares avail —
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help us to bewail
Each painful moment as it flies?

Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.

Only your restless heart keep still,
And wait in cheerful hope, content
To take whate'er his gracious will,
His all-discerning love hath sent;
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for his own.

He knows when joyful hours are best;
He sends them as He sees it meet;
When thou hast borne its fiery test,
And now art freed from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware,
And makes thee own his loving care.

Nor in the heat of pain and strife,
Think God hath cast thee off unheard,
Nor that the man whose prosperous life
Thou enviest is of Him preferred.
Time passes, and much change doth bring,
And sets a bound to everything.

All are alike before his face;
'Tis easy to our God most high
To make the rich man poor and base,
To give the poor man wealth and joy.
True wonders still of Him are wrought,
Who setteth up and brings to naught.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from his ways,
  But do thine own part faithfully ;
Trust his rich promises of grace,
  So shall it be fulfilled in thee :
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

NEWMARK.

CHAPTER VIII.

PANTING AFTER GOD.

IT is not well to be always meditating upon your own weaknesses and deficiencies and sins. Better far is it to turn with sorrow and shame from them, with holy endeavors after a better life, and fix the mind on heavenly and divine things. You have not fallen into worse ways than that wonderful poet of Israel, who has left on record his experiences in his fall and rising again; and his longings after God — the pure, holy God — are expressed in such terms as no other poet or preacher has ever been able to command. Years, centuries, ages wear away; new scenes, new dispensations, new races appear; but the strong desires of this weak old man are the feelings of

every heart yearning after God. Read with me some of his expressive lines: —

As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God!

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?

O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee:
My soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee
In a dry and thirsty land where no water is.

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

As a bird in the boundless atmosphere, as a fish in the limitless sea, as a grain of sand in the great globe of earth, so is the soul in the midst of the infinite, invisible, all-surrounding and pervading God. I have sought to make this omnipresence of God a familiar fact in your consciousness, that this walking with Him and communion with Him and panting after Him may have a practical

and evident meaning and purpose. To live in God — to enjoy his conscious presence and intercourse as that of a visible friend whose hand is in ours, and whose heart throbs with ours — this is the privilege of every soul ; and must be, dear friend, yours. As the bird longs for the free air and dies without it ; as the fish is in agony when out of its native element, and must have the water or it expires ; so the soul that has been brought by grace into union with God, must dwell in Him, and, when in separation, pants to return and enjoy his embrace.

You have tried the good there is in something less than God. How it has palled upon the taste, and failed utterly to fill the vast capacities of the immortal soul. They who live for the life that now is, do not find in their good things all the heart wants. Do not undervalue the gifts of God — wealth, and all that

wealth can buy; pleasures that come to the soul through the eye, the ear, the taste; the delights of social life, refined by culture, learning, beauty, grace, and sweetened by the charms of friendship and love. It is cant and sin to affect to despise the delights of social and domestic life, as if God were not to be enjoyed in the blessings with which He crowns our days. These are his mercies, and are to be received with gratitude. But they are not enough, and they are only the efflorescence of the source itself of infinite good. They are God's, but they are not God. He is in Himself wealth, pleasure, love; and to long for them alone and not to pant after Him, is to be satisfied with the flower when the fruit is to be had, to drink the morning dew when the fountain of living water is at your feet.

It is not needful that you deny yourself riches, to be enriched with all the

fullness of God; nor that you leave your books, to have the knowledge which is life eternal; nor to neglect your friends, to enjoy his loving-kindness better than life. Take all He gives, and rejoice. But the sunshine that makes every home an emblem of the Father's house, is the smile of the Lord. God dwells within the walls of every Christian home, and great peace have they who keep his law and walk in his ways. He is found of them who seek after Him, and makes his abode in their house and heart. So it is that panting after God brings Him to the panting soul. It is not so with the deer driven far away from his resting-place and fountains by the dogs: hunted, faint, tongue-parched, ready to perish for thirst, he pants for the cooling waters; but they are not near. His desire does not bring him the relief he needs. He may be flying farther and farther still, till, worn and wearied in the race, away

even from the hunters who sought his life, he sinks upon the earth and breathes his last gasp in vain desire for water to quench his thirst. You will not so pant and perish. Every leap you make in your chase after the fountain of life brings you nearer and still nearer to God. Each throb of your aching heart is felt in the bosom of God, as the mother yearns with love unutterable for the babe that nestles in her arms. "My flesh longeth for Thee." Not the soul only with all its faculties of intellect, not the spirit only with its moral powers awake and struggling after God; but my FLESH — the whole man, every fibre, sinew, muscle, every nerve, from the brain-centre to the farthest outpost of sensation, the system universal and alive — longs, pants, cries out for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? How good old Herbert prayed: —

Come, Lord ; my head doth burn, my heart is sick
While Thou dost ever, ever stay :
Thy long deferrings wound me to the quick,
My spirit gaspeth night and day.
O show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee !

O, loose this frame, this knot of man untie !
That my free soul may use her wing,
Which now is pinioned with mortality
As an entangled hampered thing :
O show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee.

What have I left, that I should stay and groan ?
The most of me to heaven is fled :
My thoughts and joys are all packed up and gone,
And for their old acquaintance plead.
O show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee.

Come, dearest Lord, pass not this holy season,
My flesh and bones and joints do pray :
And e'en my verse, when by the rhyme and reason
The word is *stay*, says ever COME.
O show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee.

If you have a just conception of what it is to be in God, you too will cry : I

cannot live away from Thee; O hold me, lead me, fold me to thy heart. I am weak, be Thou my strength; I am sick, Thou art the health of my countenance. I am sinful, very; so sinful, I fear to come to Thee. I would fain hide from thy presence; but my soul thirsteth for Thee! O show Thyself to me; lift upon me the light of thy face, in Jesus Christ thy Son, my Saviour, the Intercessor for me with Thee. All else has failed. The world has not within itself the good that my poor heart wants, and breaks to have. Thou art my God, and Thee alone I seek. Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but Thou art the strength of my heart and my portion forever. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. And not till then. But now, even into this prison of the flesh and sense, O come; make Thyself known to

me, and my soul shall magnify the Lord and be glad in Thee exceedingly.

My whole desire
Doth deeply turn away
Out of all time, unto eternal day.
I give myself, and all I call my own,
To Christ forever, to be his alone.

I leave the world,
Its wealth allures not me :
With God alone will I contented be.
The creature shall no longer fill my mind ;
In the Creator what I want I find.

Now, O my God !
My comfort, portion, rest !
Thou, none but Thou, shalt reign within my breast.
Call me to Thee ! call me Thyself — O speak !
And bind my heart to Thee, whom most I seek !

Then let me dwell
But as a pilgrim here :
One to whom earth seems distant — heaven more near.
Let this my joy, my life, my life-work, be,
To die to self — to live, my Lord, to Thee.

I know this road
Through narrow straits doth wend,
Wherein my stubborn will must stoop and bend.

Jesus, I offer unto Thee my will;
Thy love can make it humble, sweet, and still.

Thou art my King —
My King henceforth alone;
And I thy servant, Lord, am all thine own.
Give me thy strength: O! let thy dwelling be
In this poor heart, that pants, my Lord, for Thee!

TERSTEEGEN

CHAPTER IX.

PEACE IN GOD.

AND yet, after all, I hear you say that you have not the perfect peace which seems to be one of the great comforts of a truly religious life. You know what it ought to be, and you have a vivid conception of the enjoyment that must be theirs of whom it is said, "Great peace have they." But you have it not, and would be told how to get it.

It is well for you to keep in mind that many have peace without any right to it. The ostrich that hides his head in time of danger, and considers himself safe because he does not see what is to hurt him, is no more foolish than you would be if you were at peace simply because you are insensible. They may be in the

greatest danger who are the least alive to the imminence of the peril. And others are not at peace, because they doubt the strength of the bridge over which they are passing. Nervous and timid and ignorant people are often afraid where there is no danger — their apprehensions being the fruit of their own imaginations. Now, it is not the part of wisdom to disturb the peace of any who are justly at ease, and it is equally wrong to encourage a false and fatal security when the bridge is unsafe.

But we have the means of knowing the nature of the structure which sustains our hopes, and it is our own fault if we have not all the information we need to enable us to understand fully and truly the foundations on which we are building for eternity. I do not know another subject of greater importance. It must press itself on every intelligent mind ; and one who is thoughtful and

reverent, as every immortal being should be, will often ask himself, "What is to be my hereafter?" We take the Bible as our guide, and accept it as declaring all that man is to believe and do, that he may enjoy God and himself forever. To reason with those who do not accept this rule of faith and practice, brings us into another field, where Infidelity and Christianity pitch their hostile tents. We take the system of religion as we find it in the Gospels, and on the strength of its doctrines we rest the everlasting destinies of our souls. Believing that we are *to be*, and that it doth not yet *appear* what we shall be, faith in the Word opens to us the future, and we have the comfort of believing that on the conditions of the Gospel we *shall* be always in the enjoyment of God. This is our faith. And if you are wanting it, and are in a state of constant unrest and anxiety because you have it not, then it is well for you to

test your experiences in the crucible of the Gospels, and see whether your hope is gold or dross.

You have felt the infinite contrast between yourself and the holiness of God, and with self-condemnation have turned away from sin to seek after that alone which is well-pleasing in his sight. It is the simplest thing in the world to say, "If you cherish sin with any degree of complacency, you cannot have peace with God." Light and dark may just as soon delight themselves in the same room at the same time, as for sin and peace to dwell in company. And if you are complaining of a want of joy in God, while you are hugging to your heart anything that is not lovely to the eye of Him who is the perfection of beauty, it is not needful to go further in search of the cause of your want of peace. But if you are disturbed by the fact that former sins have justly severed your relationship, and that

in spite of all you can do there is still a law in your heart that subjects you to the dominion of sin, so that when you would do good evil is present with you; then would I turn away your eyes from this self-study, and ask you to take into your mind the central idea of the Gospel, that the Christ of God has made such satisfaction for sin that yours are forgiven: not for what you feel or do about them, but for what the One who saves has felt and done for you. If you hate this sin that rules over you, and desire to be delivered from its bondage and to be conformed to the image of the heavenly, what you cannot do for yourself is done for you by another, even Christ, and by Him you are made at one with God. There is, therefore, now no condemnation. You have accepted this theory of pardon, peace, and eternal life, and there is no other on which a believer in the divinity of the Gospels can expect to be

saved. Taking this theory and putting your soul upon it, it is folly unspeakable to be disturbed in mind as to your future state. By receiving Christ as your Saviour to atone for sin, to make you at one with God who is your Father, you have been brought near unto Him, and are now united to Him, as the branch to the vine. As the child belongs to the parent, you are adopted into the family and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

It is not well for you to be often talking about yourself, looking at yourself, making a merit of thinking yourself a great sinner, and magnifying your own faults and sins ; your want of conformity to the will of God ; your neglect of duty ; your unfruitful life ; and especially your want of religious enjoyment.

Think less of what you have done, and more of what Christ has done. Love Him more and serve Him better than

you have ever done. Study his life and follow his example by living, not for yourself, but for others, trying every day, and every hour of every day, and each moment of every hour, to do something that shall be like what Christ would do if He were in your house and heart. You will very soon find that the sense of unrest will vanish in the pursuit of the good and useful. You will get rest by taking exercise. You will renew your strength by walking with Christ. Your peace will be like a river, not a stagnant pool; but flowing on, refreshing the meadows and making glad the city. And the peace that passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind.

COMMIT thy way to God;
The weight which makes thee faint —
Worlds are to Him no load!
To Him breathe thy complaint.
He who for winds and clouds
Maketh a pathway free,

Through wastes or hostile crowds
  Can make a way for thee.

Hope, then, though woes be doubled,
  Hope, and be undismayed;
Let not thine heart be troubled,
  Nor let it be afraid.
This prison where thou art,
  Thy God will break it soon,
And flood with light thy heart,
  In his own blessed noon.

Up, up, the day is breaking,
  Say to thy cares, Good-night!
Thy troubles from thee shaking
  Like dreams in day's fresh light.
Thou wearest not the crown,
  Nor the best course canst tell;
God sitteth on the throne,
  And guideth all things well.

Trust Him to govern, then:
  No king can rule like Him.
How wilt thou wonder when
  Thine eyes no more see dim,
To see those paths which vex thee,
  How wise they were and meet;
The works which now perplex thee
  How beautiful, complete!

Faithful the love thou sharest;
  All, all is well with thee;

The crown from hence thou bearest
With shouts of victory.
In thy right hand to-morrow
Thy God shall place the palms.
To Him who chased thy sorrow,
How glad will be thy psalms!

PAUL GERHARDT.

CHAPTER X.

SYMPATHY WITH CHRIST.

IN all poetry and history there is no drama like that which is written by Matthew, and will be seen in living characters on the day for which all other days were made. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, the King shall say unto them on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

And the reason the King gives for this infinite gift and eternal invitation is founded upon the good deeds which the good have done to Christ in the person of his brethren. Read the several grounds of distinction as the King himself defines them: —

"I was ahungered, and ye gave me meat.

"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

"Naked, and ye clothed me.

"I was sick, and ye visited me.

"I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And when you tremble lest you have never done these acts of kindness to Christ, He goes on to say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The sufferers here mentioned are not the *disciples* of Christ only. They may have been great sinners. They are brethren of Christ, as those whose nature He took upon Him when He became a man. We have not yet fully entered into the mystery of the incarnation, by which the relationship between the human and the divine was established;

our nature was exalted as his could not be debased, and Christ, the Son of God, is not ashamed to call us sinners his brethren. The prisoner to whom we minister may be a felon justly doomed to die, but if we *do* to him for the sake of Christ, we do it unto Christ. Doing to the felon was doing what Christ did for us. He did not come for the righteous. If in time of famine we were to send food to Christians only, what thanks would we deserve? Do not even sinners help sinners? It is not for us to stop and ask if a sufferer is a saint or a sinner. The greater the sinner, the greater the need of our pity and help. We want to get into living sympathy with Christ, and to do this we must come into personal contact with living sufferers. This is doing to Him what He did for others, and what He is doing now for us. He was always going about doing good. They brought the sick to

Him, and He healed them. He stopped the march of sorrow to the grave, and gave back a dead son alive to his widowed mother. And what sympathy with suffering the story of Lazarus of Bethany reveals! He died for sinners, and therefore for sufferers. He opened his own heart and shed all his blood that the wounds of a bleeding world might be healed.

But you and I never shed a drop of blood for Christ! Never.

We have wept over the story of the cross, as we have many a time shed tears over the pages of fictitious woe. But tears are not blood, and Christ shed blood. And for us to be in sympathy with Him we must drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism.

Our age is so commercial, and our religious work is done so largely by machinery, that it is very difficult for a private Christian to come into personal

contact with his suffering fellow creatures, so as to do them practical good. We can give money, and it is our duty, as it should be our joy, to give money. There is joy in giving, but it is not glory. It does not fill the soul with golden light and peace, as if heaven had burst into the bosom and filled it to overflowing. It is noble to give, but it is Christlike to do and to suffer, and especially to do and suffer for the suffering. It is a blessed thing to take the money you have earned by toil and care, and give it to the poor. But it is more to take up your cross, and go where poverty and sickness, where sin and misery are huddled, and there with your own hands to bind up the wounds, and mingle tears and prayers with the sighs of the distressed for whom the Saviour died in agony unspeakable.

You need not become a monk or a nun. The only brotherhood or sister-

hood we want is the family of Christ, a fellowship that makes us all brethren and sisters, so that when one member suffers all the members suffer with it. But without becoming a member of any other association than the Church of Christ, you may easily find work to do that will bring your soul and body into active and practical sympathy with those for whom Christ died, and whom He recognizes as his brethren. All works of mercy springing from love to Christ are accepted by Him. There is no merit in the work, as there is no merit in faith. But as the fruit of love it brings the soul into union with Him who wrought out salvation for us by his works, and owns us as co-workers with Him, and more than this, as not only doing for Him but as doing to Him when we are kind to those who need our sympathy and aid. He bore our sorrows; let us bear the woes of one another.

This is at least a part of the mystery of God in the flesh, taking upon Him our nature, and becoming one with us in our sorrows, suffering with us and for us: as we suffer when the child of our affection suffers. He is the brother of all who suffer: of the least of those whose nature Jesus shared when He was a man. And so the least of them is a Christ to you if you will do him good.

The least! I would not magnify the word. Who is the least of those whom Jesus pities, and who is Jesus unto us if we are pitiful to them? It is a mother dying in a cold garret with a starving babe on her dry breast. It is a drunkard staggering to his family, who cower into corners when the savage enters. It is a felon in prison, clanking his chains, and waiting the day of his doom. It is a sick stranger in a hospital, friendless and dying. It is a diseased and dirty child, ready to perish for want of water

and air and a mother's love. Any one of these is a Christ to you, if you will minister to him in the name and for the sake of Him who did more for you.

A few days ago a lady of wealth and beauty and refinement, while on a mission of mercy, found a little child ; it was friendless and filthy, sick, sore, and dying. A few dollars, of which her purse was full, would have procured others to minister to its wants. But she took it into her carriage and carried it to her elegant home, and washed and clothed it, and laid it in her own bed, and tended it with her own soft hands, until death came, and bore its soul to Him who said, " Suffer little children to come unto me." And inasmuch as she did it unto the least, the most helpless little sufferer in the great city, a dying beggar baby, a waif, an outcast for whom nobody cares, she did it unto Christ. The person of Jesus was in the rags and dirt of that

dying infant, and its spirit witnesses before the King that she loved Him. And when the stars are falling, and the elements are melting with fervent heat, she will hear Him saying, "As you did it unto the least, you did it unto me." Sympathy with human suffering does not say to the destitute, "Be ye warmed and filled." Nor does it spend itself in giving money to the society that feeds and clothes the poor. It does this, for these are blessed agencies that Christian love employs to seek and save that which was lost. But it does more. It goes about as Christ did. It bears the woes of others, as He did when his back was given to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hear you say, "I know that I love Him, but what can I do for Him? I would die for Him, but O, tell me how to live for Him!"

Well, dear friend, I tell you to begin in your own heart and house, and let the

love of Christ dwell in you richly, constraining you to kindness, gentleness, tenderness, toward the least and humblest under your roof, or who cross your path in the walks of daily life.

And if you have the strength, and nearer duties do not hinder, go out into the lanes and garrets and cellars where Want and Misery, with their twin sisters, Sin and Shame, hide away from the sight even of human pity and help. Put your hand into the hand of Poverty, Disease, or wan Despair, and lift it up into the sunlight of hope and peace and joy. Go lay your warm heart by the heart that is bleeding and breaking. With the soft, sweet caress of Christian love you may soothe the agony, and pour in the oil and wine of hope and peace. You may go and sit all night by the bedside of the poor sufferer, ministering to the constant wants of one who shifts from side to side by turns, racked with pains and tortured

with fears. By such practical charities that cost some self-sacrifice, bearing a dim and distant resemblance to that which Jesus made, when He left the glory of heaven, and on wings of love came down to die for you, will you taste the blessedness of them who have part in the sufferings of Christ.

And when He comes again in the glory of his Father, you shall hear Him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

A POOR wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer "Nay;"
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came,
Yet was there something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered — not a word he spake;

Just perishing for want of bread;
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,
And ate, — but gave me part again;
Mine was an angel's portion then,
For while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

I spied him where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked his thirst,
He heard it, saw it hurrying on;
I ran to raise the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,
Dipped, and returned it running o'er;
I drank, and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out; it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof;
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

Stripped, wounded, beaten nigh to death,
I found him by the highway-side;
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed:
I had myself a wound concealed;

But from that hour forgot the smart,
And Peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him midst shame and scorn;
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, "I will!"

Then in a moment to my view,
The Stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew,
My Saviour stood before mine eyes.
He spake; and my poor name he named:
"Of me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou didst them unto me."

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